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"UNCLE JOE" ON THE WABASH

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neck of the woods. It was not necessary to introduce reformed spelling in those days, because we learned to spell according to the best authority, and we did not forget. It was a disgrace not to spell well; and what a hubbub would have been created then by any effort on the part of the Government to reform spelling by making it easy!

"Then there was the singing master! The country has lost through his departure, and the boys and the girls of this generation have missed nothing more attractive in the old life than the singing school.

"Courting? Why, bless you, my boy, the young fellows of to-day do not know the meaning of that word! When a young man would walk five or even ten miles through the snow or rain and mud, freeze his ears and fingers, and face the danger of wildcats, to see his girl, and that too in the general living room with the family, he was entitled to admit that he was courting. And that was the rule, not the exception. The young fellows would start out Sunday afternoon to see their sweethearts, and no weather was too bad to keep them at home. It might be too cold or too muddy to take out a horse; but in that case he would go on foot, and he would go through as much hardship to see his girl as did the knights of old to rescue fair maids in castles bold. But it was his devotion, his courting, and when he won that girl he stuck to her through thick and through thin, through good report and evil report, obeying the scriptural injunction that what God has joined together no man should put asunder. There were no marriages of convenience and few hasty marriages then. The courting was long and there were no divorces to follow. The young people might meet often at the singing school, or the dance, or the husking bee; but these did not take the place of regular courting.

"The courting was on Sunday night, and the young man went religiously to see his girl and remained so until midnight with the object of his affection, even though her father and mother and the younger children were present to share in the visit; and when he went home, either through the storm or under the bright starlight, he walked the earth as a conqueror, for he had been in the presence that to him represented the real poem of life. He had been courting! And that is all we need, to bring back safe and sane ideas of marriage,—courting—courting in the true sense of the word, the man seeking, if not serving, like Jacob, seven years for the object of his affection. Then he will stick to her and she to him through life. There were some old fashions that have not been improved upon, and one of them is the old way of courting."

In The Sunday Magazine for September 29 Speaker Cannon will tell "Why I Became a Republican," and in a subsequent issue "How I Became a Lawyer."

IN PRAISE OF CATS

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does not care to go to bed with the children, who offer it the uneasy hospitality of their cots. The deep, mysterious night summons it to vagabondage, to freedom, to the sweets of courtship, and the joys of war. No cushion is soft enough, no fire warm enough, to hold it back. Out into the darkness it goes, and presently we hear the long drawn wail, the clamorous battle cry, the rush to combat, the yells of rage, of victory, of defiance. The sounds are not soothing, but there is wonderful eloquence in every note. The pleasures of minstrelsy, the honors of the tournament, are Pussy's heritage. "None but the brave deserve the fair," is the motto of his race. He fights for the rapture of fighting, and he fights for the possession of the prize.

Selina sits on the fence, like the Queen of Love and Beauty, and dilates with complicated emotions as Thomas the valiant and Richard the Lion Hearted charge under the friendly stars. Her low insidious meow incites them to bloodier ardor, to more reckless intrepidity. Presently there is an ominous silence and then an "infernal gallemalphy o' din," as the champions meet in their final struggle. Richard, with a yell of despair, rolls off the kitchen roof, and Thomas lifts up his voice in one unearthly cry which pierces the heart of the night. Noisy? Of course it is noisy; but the sounds are full of passion, of cajolery, of splendid joy and hatred and exultation.

This much is clear. Whether we approve or disapprove of Pussy's way of life, we must grant her freedom, or do without her companionship,—that sweet companionship which has in it moments of intimacy and hours of gracious friendship. A cat may even give us her confidence, but on her own terms, and subject to periods of abrupt withdrawal. She will not permit us to delude ourselves into the comfortable belief that we are necessary to her happiness. She will not bestow her affection in return for food and shelter. But if we approach her as friend to friend, as equal to equal, she will tranquilize us by her repose, and teach our restless discontent the perfect balance of serene egotism.

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